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Gluck's Overture to "Iphigenia in Aulis."

(Letter from RICHARD WAGNER to the Editor of the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik," Leipzig, June, 1854.)

* * * * A worthy friend, who neither makes a pursuit of music nor reads the musical journals, expressed the wish to me one day, that he might hear for once something of Gluck, so as to gain some impression of his music, which he had nowhere had a chance to hear. I found myself in despair, because at first I could think of nothing else but the performance of an act out of one of Gluck's operas, and that only in a concert. Between ourselves, I cannot imagine a worse travesty of a dramatic, especially a tragic, musical piece, than to have the death agonies of Orestes and Iphigenia, for example, sung down to us from a concert orchestra by people in dress coat and ball toilette, with the huge bouquet and the part held between their shiny gloves. Now such is the "one-sidedness" of my nature, that, where the artistic illusion is not complete, I cannot feel even half satisfied,—a thing so easy to every professional musician. Forced to abandon the representation of an opera scene of Gluck for my friend, I found nothing left to choose, but the most perfect instrumental composition by Gluck, the Overture to "Iphigenia in Aulis."

But here again I met a difficulty: This Overture, it is well known, passes with its last measures into the first scene of the opera, and has no conclusion for itself. But I remembered to have heard in concerts in my youth, as well as later, before the performance of *Iphigenia in Tauris* in the Court theatre of Dresden, under the direction of my former colleague Reissiger, this overture with a conclusion made by Mozart. It remained in my memory, too, that at that time it always produced on me a cold, indifferent impression; but I believed this wholly owing to a complete mistake, afterwards made clear to me, of the true tempo (which I held now in my hand), and not to the Mozart ending itself. Accordingly I took up the Overture, in the Mozart arrangement, in a rehearsal with the orchestra. But when I came to the appendage, after the first eight bars it became impossible for me to let it go on any further. I felt at once, that, if this Mozart ending harmonized very unsatisfactorily with the peculiar thoughts of the Gluck overture, it would be utterly intolerable performed in the right tempo of the preceding piece.—Now with this tempo, according to my experience, the case stands as follows:—

In the last century, the standing cut of all overtures, especially to serious operas, consisted of a short introduction in a slow tempo, followed by a quicker movement of greater length. They were so accustomed to this, that in Germany, where Gluck's *Iphigenia* itself for

a long while was not performed, this Overture, which was given by itself in concerts, was involuntary regarded as a thing composed according to the usual cut. Indeed it does contain two distinct pieces of originally different tempo, namely a slower one as far as to the 19th measure, and from that point on another, which is just twice as fast. But Gluck had in mind, with this Overture, to introduce at once the first scene, which begins with the very same theme with the Overture; accordingly, in order to avoid all outward interruption of the tempo, he wrote the Allegro movement in notes twice as short as he would have done if he had indicated the change of tempo by the term "Allegro." This is very obvious to any one who keeps on in the score, and there in the first act considers the scene of the tumultuous Greeks with Calchas; here we find precisely the same figure, which in the Overture is executed in sixteenths, written in eighths, and precisely because the tempo is here marked "Allegro." To each of these eighth-notes the chorus has several times to utter a syllable, which is quite in character with the uproarious army. Now, with a slight modification, determined by the character of the rest of the themes, Gluck took this tempo for the Allegro of his Overture—only, as we have just said, changing the mode of writing, so as outwardly to retain the opening "Andante" tempo, which returns after the Overture. And so in the old printed Paris edition of the score there is no trace of any change of tempo indicated; but the original "Andante" goes on through the overture and over into the beginning of the first scene unchanged.

Now the German concert directors overlooked this peculiarity of writing, and at the point where the shorter notes begin, with the up-beat to the twentieth bar, they let the old traditional quicker tempo enter; so that finally the audacious sign "Allegro" passed into German editions of the Overture (perhaps after them also into the French).—How incredibly Gluck's overture has become disfigured by this twice too quick style of performance, any person, who has taste and understanding, can judge if he listens to a rendering of the piece conducted in the correct time, as Gluck intended it, and then compares this with the trivial noise commonly presented to him as Gluck's masterwork. That he did not always feel this, that it never before occurred to him how different the case ought to be with this much praised Overture, which one could stupidly and indifferently play as an introduction before a wholly different opera (a thing impossible had it been rightly understood), is only to be explained from our general experience, from youth up, of dragging about with us such a load of inculcated, passively accepted respect for authority, that, when at last a definite impression scares away the phantom, we can scarcely comprehend how we were ever able to regard this as anything

essential, genuine and real.—But there are many very happy persons, to whom this impression and this recognition never comes; who keep so tight a rein upon their feeling, and can hold every involuntary determination of it through any new phenomena so far aloof from them, that in spite of every experience they cherish a pride in remaining what they were, or what they have been made to be in some earlier single period of development. Of this I will relate to you an example in connection with Gluck's Overture.

When I was preparing for the Dresden theatre the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, then so very seldom put upon the stage, I sent for the old Paris edition of the score, so that I might not be misled by certain single arrangements by Spontini in the Berlin score that had been placed at my command. From that I learned the original intention of Gluck for the Overture; and through this only correct conception of the tempo I came at once to feel the grand, the powerful, inimitable beauty of this composition; whereas formerly—as I have already remarked—it always left me cold, although I naturally had never ventured to express it. So I saw the necessity of an altogether different rendering; I recognized the massive breadth of the brazen unisono, the splendor and the energy of the succeeding violin figures over the powerful movement of the basses up and down the scale in quarter notes; but especially I now first comprehended the significance of the tender passage:



with the touchingly graceful second half:



which, as it used to be played, without expression (how else could it be!) in doubly rapid time, had always made on me the ludicrous impression of a mere scroll or flourish.—The excellent orchestra, which had already gained full confidence in me, entered—although at first with wonder and possessed by habit—into my conception, and by its fine performance of the Overture worthily introduced the warm and vividly colored representation of the whole work, which gained the most popular, that is to say the least affected success of all the operas of Gluck in Dresden.—But now I fared strangely with the critics, above all with the then principal reviewer of Dresden, Herr C. Banck. What he had never heard before, to-wit, the whole opera, found in my arrangement, and in spite of his antipathy to all my past leading, his pretty unqualified applause; but the changed rendering of the Overture, which he had often heard, was an abomination to him. Here the force of habit operated; so

that I had the singular experience of appearing the most confused just where I meant to work the most conscientiously and with the most complete conviction; of passing for entirely spoilt, just where I believed I was giving the most distinct satisfaction to sound feeling. Besides that, I put another weapon into the hand of my adversary; in certain passages, where the opposition of the principal motive rises to a passionate, violent pitch, especially toward the end, in the eight bars before the last return of the great unisono, it seemed to me indispensable to quicken the movement, so that with the last entrance of the chief theme I might rein up the tempo, equally necessary again for the character of this theme, and hold it to its former breadth. But unfortunately the critic, listening only superficially, and seizing not the purpose, but only the material of the purpose, found in this a proof of my erroneous idea of the principal tempo, since at the close I well nigh abandoned it myself. From this I perceived that the critic must always be right, because he is a stickler for words and syllables, but is never struck by the spirit itself. * * * *

We come back now to Mozart, whose conclusion to the *Iphigenia Overture* made me almost despair of giving my Zurich friend any idea of Gluck's music through a performance of this work. I, uninitiated into the mysteries of the regular musical art guild, perceived, as I have said, that even Mozart only knew the overture according to the mutilated manner of delivery which I have censured; and the clearest proof that a distorted rendering must lead even the most genial musician to an entirely false conception of an unfamiliar musical work, imposing as its excellencies may be otherwise, was furnished me by Mozart, who certainly would not have written his brilliant, but wholly unfit ending, had he rightly understood the overture.—What was I to do? Make a conclusion myself! That were child's play for every musician by profession, but not for me, poor dilettante, who could prudently trust myself in music only so far as I might hope to realize poetic purposes in it.—Now was there a poetic purpose lying at the foundation of Gluck's overture? Of course there was; and just such a purpose as rejected every arbitrary musical conclusion.

To me, one-sided layman, the subject matter (*Inhalt*) of this overture, extremely characteristic and determining its whole artistic plan, so dawned upon me, that in it the chief motives of the expected drama were brought together with the happiest distinctness in their effect upon the feeling. I say: brought together, placed *beside* each other; for *out* of one another they could be developed only in so far as each one singly makes its distinctest impression by having its opposite placed close beside it, so that, through this sharp and immediate contrast, the impression just received from the preceding motive is of great importance, nay of decisive influence, for the peculiar effect of the motive which follows it. Accordingly the entire contents of Gluck's overture appeared to me the following:—1) a motive of appeal out of deep sorrows gnawing at the heart; 2) a motive of authority, of an imperious, all-powerful command; 3) a motive of grace, of virgin tenderness; 4) a motive of sad and painful sym-

pathy. Now the whole extent of the Overture is filled out by nothing else but the continued alternation of these last three main motives, bound together by little secondary motives derived from them; in themselves there is nothing changed except the key. Only in their significance and in their mutual relation, they are made more and more impressive through this varied, characteristic alternation, so that, when finally the curtain rises, and Agamemnon invokes the ruthless goddess with the first motive, who will only be propitiated and grant favor to the Grecian host at the price of the sacrifice of his tender daughter, we are transported into a state of sympathy with a sublime tragic conflict, which we expect to see unfolded out of these distinct dramatic motives.

[Conclusion next time.]

The Rise of Opera.

II.

SIR W. DAVENANT introduced a kind of opera into England in 1656; this was twenty-two years before the first public production of opera in Germany. In these plays, female performers first appeared on the stage. "The Tempest," made into an opera by Shadwell, and set to music by MATTHEW LOCK, was first given in 1673. LOCK also wrote the "Macbeth" music, and "Circe." Lulli being then in fashion, LOCK imitated him largely. GRABU came to England and composed the allegorical opera of "Albin and Albanus," to Dryden's verses. The Duchess of Mazarin introduced a strong taste for foreign music, which prevailed till H. PURCELL came before the world (1658-1695). This celebrated man needs some special notice. At the age of 18 he became organist of Westminster Abbey and wrote the music of a play, called "Dido and Eneas," at about the same age. This is most excellent music. He wrote and composed other musical plays. "Indian Queen" and "Boadicea" are two of the best remembered; for in them occur the well-known airs, "To arms," "Britons, strike home" and "Come unto these yellow sands." PURCELL also composed the music to Beaumont and Fletcher's "Dioclesian." According to Mr. HAWES, PURCELL's music "stands between the past and future: he felt his relation to the one by sympathy, to the other by a kind of almost prophetic intuition." His music is full of rhythm and melody, and is of great beauty. His songs are particularly admired. "Fairest Isle," and "Let the dreadful engines of eternal will," are typical songs, as specimens of his great expressive power. He was, indeed, a genius; for he had no predecessor in England, and little acquaintance with Italian works, except by bare perusal. His orchestral resources were also very poor. The first opera performed on the Italian model was "Arsinoe" (1705). About this time, NICOLINI appeared in England and made his *debut* in "Pyrrhus and Demetrius," originally composed by A. SCARLATTI, and noticeable as being the last opera in which the singers all spoke in their own language, so that an Italian song was answered by an English recitation, etc. This absurd fashion must have made a grotesque effect. Nicolini was both actor and singer, and made a name for several other operas. It was at this time that Handel appeared. Of him we must treat separately, and now follow out the course of English opera, properly speaking.

The establishment of Italian opera caused the neglect of English drama for the time. In 1712 HUGHES and GALLIARD produced "Calypso," but were unsuccessful, and until the year 1728 nothing worth noticing appeared. Then came out the famous "Beggars' Opera," GAY writing the words, DR. PERCIVAL binding together the airs. It was offered at first to the house at Covent Garden (originally built by Sir C. Wren); refused here, it was accepted by Rich, lessee of Drury Lane, and was a complete success, notwithstanding the dictum of both Pope and Swift, before it appeared, that "it would be a failure." It was said to have made Gay rich and Rich gay, for it brought the authors £2,000 profit. Lavinia Fenton, first mistress, then wife, of the Duke of Bolton, won her laurels by acting Polly Peachum. It was full of hits against those in power, and retained its popularity for a hundred years; but now it is rarely performed, owing to its great licentiousness, and to a difficulty in

getting a fitting hero and heroine. Every sort of vice is depicted in the most tempting colors. Macbeth, the principal character, is a highwayman of the worst type; Polly alone remains pure, and is thence an impossibility with such surroundings. Dr. Johnson says of it, "There is in it such a labefaction of all principles, as to be injurious to morality;" and we must rest satisfied with this judgment, though Swift and others have tried to make it out a piece harmless in its effects. The success it met with caused C. Johnson to bring out "The Village Opera." The music consisted of old tunes set to new words. "Tereminta," written by Cary, and composed by one SMITH, was a failure. "Amelia" succeeded better. Miss ARNE came out in this. Her brother, the great Dr. ARNE (1710-1778) composed music to Addison's "Rosamund," and to Fielding's "Tom Thumb;" but it was "Comus" which fixed his fame. This did not see the light till 1731, a year after the "Dragon of Wantley," a burlesque on the Italian opera, written by Carey, composed by LAMPE. The music of this piece is excellent, and it is a matter of great regret that it should have been suffered to decay.

To return to ARNE, "Artaxerxes" was the greatest of his works, and by far the most celebrated of English operas. The words were a bad translation from Metastasio. The dialogue is entirely in recitation; the airs are what have fixed its long renown, for almost down to the present day there have been performances of it. It was written to emulate the Italian school, to bring English music forward again. Mrs. Cibber, Miss Brent, worthily carried out ARNE's ideas, and sang passages full of what now would be considered great difficulty. The lovely airs, "In infancy our hopes and fears," "If e'er the cruel tyrant," and "Water parted from the sea" will long be prized. In 1736, appeared "Love in a village," written by BICKERSTAFF. The airs were partly by ARNE, partly selected from those popular at the time. He tried, and failed, in an Italian opera, the "Olympiade" of Metastasio. After this ARNE contented himself with making additions to PURCELL's works. To the "Tempest," he added "Where the bee sucks." He also wrote music to some of Shakespeare's songs, and two oratorios. These last were unsuccessful. His was not such an original genius as PURCELL's; he copied more from the Italian, and by this, though he gained in sweetness, he lost in grandeur and true feeling. He had very few rivals, but at his death many pasticcio operas arose in the style of "Love in a village," "The maid of the mill," "Lionel and Clarissa," and others.

T. LINLEY, lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, about this time, with the help of Sheridan, his son-in-law, wrote "The Duenna." W. JACKSON, of Exeter, wrote very little dramatic music, except "The lord of the manor," in which Mrs. Crouch attained celebrity. In it occur the beautiful airs, "When first this humble roof I knew," and "Encompass'd in an angel's frame." Dr. ARNOLD wrote for Covent Garden and the Haymarket C. DIBBIN (1768), and W. SHIELD also. The works of all these are light, sometimes comic; the musical portion consisting of songs and duets, with occasionally a very slight connecting piece or chorus.

The first step towards the modern opera was made by Dr. STORACE (1788). His first work was "The Haunted Tower," then "The Pirates," "Lodoiska," "The Iron Chest." He was the first to put connected pieces and finales on the English stage. His music is in the Italian style of that day. He left "Mahmoud" unfinished, a piece which he was writing for the public appearance of the afterwards celebrated Braham, who himself wrote ephemeral pieces. Inledon, Mme. Mara, Mrs. Billington, were also on the boards at this time. Bismor wrote "The Circassian Bride," which gained him his name, and immediately after it appeared he was made Director of Music at Covent Garden, and brought out "The Maniac."

With the advance of taste, consequent on the appearance of the music of Mozart, Weber, and Rossini, English composers soon withdrew. About 1834 a revival was attempted at the English Opera House. BARNETT's "Mountain Sylph" was the longest in favor of the pieces performed; but eventually this house left off representing operas and turned into the Lyceum. Since then Covent Garden and Drury Lane have reigned supreme rivals; Miss A. Kemble, Macready, Bunn, have been their best known directors. In 1842 Mr. Maddox opened an English opera-house, where chiefly versions of Italian operas were performed; but this house lasted only eight years, and with it ended all attempts at English opera for very many years. MICHAEL

BALFE (1808-1870), born in Dublin, studied in Italy, and wrote at Milan the music of the ballet of "Pe-rouse." His first complete opera was "I Rivali" for Palermo. On his return to London he composed "The Siege of Rochelle" for the Lyceum; but that theatre having been closed just before its performance by the bankruptcy of the manager, the opera was taken by the manager of Drury Lane Theatre. Here it proved a great success, and held the stage for three months. His "Maid of Artois" was supported by the singing of Malibran. One of the songs, "The light of other days," was universally sung in England. "Catherine Gray," "Joan of Arc," "Falstaff" (the first opera, English, brought out at Her Majesty's Opera since the days of Arne) "Diadeste," and "Kedenthe." These were all of secondary merit. His best was "The Bohemian Girl," which spread his fame to foreign countries. The "Castle of Aymon," "Daughter of St. Mark," "Enchantress" were written for Drury Lane. In 1846, he wrote "L'Etoile de Seville" for L'Academie Royale, Paris. During his six years of tenure of the conductorship of Her Majesty's Theatre, he brought out his "Bondman" and "Maid of Honor." After this came "The Sicilian Bride" and "The devil's in it." The "Rose of Castle" and "Satanella" were written in 1857 and 1858. His last opera, "Il Talismano," was given in 1875. J. BARNETT is best known by his "Mountain Sylph," J. F. BARNETT by the "Ancient Mariner." MACFARREN's "Robin Hood" and "Helvellyn" are his principal dramatic works. A. HOLMES in his opera of "Inez and Castro" has established a strong claim to "dramatic power and fine orchestration." "Fair Rosamond" by BARNETT, and "The Outpost" by HULLIAN, have met with well-merited success.

But we must now go back to HANDEL. Born in 1685, in an unmusical family, his natural musical genius was well-nigh quenched by a father who destined him for the law. But his great talents early revealed themselves, and he received the patronage of the great Elector of Brandenburg. He left his native place of Halle, and settled in Hamburg, where he became violinist in the Opera-house. In his twentieth year, he wrote "Almira," which proved so successful that it was repeated thirty nights following. This opera was quickly succeeded by "Dafne," and "Florinda." Turning his thoughts to perfecting his art by travelling in Italy, Handel went to Florence, where he was patronized by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and wrote "Roderigo." Thence he went to Venice, where he wrote "Agrippina," which made a perfect furore, and gained for him the title of "Il caro Sassone." At Rome he gained the friendship of Cardinal Ottoboni, and composed "The Triumph of Time." After dawdling about Italy, he took up his quarters for some time at Hanover, where he received £300 from the Elector; and, at the same time, permission to visit England. Finding the Haymarket under the management of Aaron Hill, and London gone mad for music of the Italian school, he had to follow the fashion, and A. Hill writing the libretto, he composed "Rinaldo." The air "Lascia ch'io pianga" still lives. The romantic interest of the subject, the charms of the music, and the splendor of the spectacle, made the opera an object of general attraction; and its success was sufficient to counteract the strictures and sarcasms of Addison, smarting under the failure of his "Rosamund." Handel returned to Hanover; then revisited London, where, on the accession of the Elector of Hanover (whom he had by his neglect so highly offended,) as George I., Handel ran the risk of losing favor; but his hold on the people was too strong, and a reconciliation between the King and the musician had to be effected. While a guest of the Earl of Burlington, he wrote "Amadigi," which marks a great decline in dramatic art—great attention being given to stage fixings, and other subordinate matters. While with the Duke of Chandos at Cannons, he composed his fine anthems, the serenata of "Acis and Galatea," and the oratorio of "Esther." For three years now followed a total suspension of operatic performances. In 1720 the Royal Academy of Music was established. A sum of £50,000 was subscribed for the carrying on of the Italian opera. Handel from Cannons, Ariosti from Berlin, Bononcini from Rome, were summoned to attend, and give their services.

In 1721 the opera of "Mucio Scaevola," the joint work of the three, appeared, and in 1723 "Otho," by Handel alone, the most popular of his works. In it sang the celebrated Cuzzoni, with whose voice the composer was so charmed that for her he wrote his most beautiful airs. "Affani del Pensier" was

the best of these. Cuzzoni's praises drew large crowds, and the tickets rose to four guineas a-night, but she soon wore out Handel's patience with her airs and self-will, and he turned to Bordoni and Faustina. "Radamistus" was given in 1720. Handel thought "Ombra Cara" in this opera one of the finest he ever wrote; it is still heard. In this piece acted Donastanti and Senesino. In "Flavio" there is "Dona pace," the first scenic quintet ever composed. In "Giulio Cesare" "Alma del gran Pompeo" is still admired. In the few years succeeding 1725 "Scipio," "Siroe," and "Ptolemy" appeared. With these came the decline again of the Italian opera, and in 1732 Handel began his immortal oratorios, though a year afterwards he made another short and ill-fated attempt to succeed in opera. "Orlando" belongs to this period. From thirty-two to forty he had twelve years of incessant struggling with the fashion of his age. In this time he composed sixteen operas and five oratorios. Some of these operas, known hardly except by name, are "Ariadne," "Arisdante," "Alcina," "Atalanta," "Arminius," "Justin," "Berenice," "Faramonda." With "Imenico" and "Deidamio" he finally quit the dramatic stage.

Handel's is a strange career. Three times, despite of opposition, he gained his way, forced his works on the public, and made a fortune; three times he failed and retired. His last years were spent in honorable independence, saddened, indeed, by his infirmity, but full of satisfaction that at last his great works had prevailed over sickly Italian and homely English music. His manuscripts, which were left to his friend Smith, were by his son handed over to his admirer, George III. He died in 1759, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

III.

The beginning of the 18th century was the Augustine Age of Italian music, when no less a poet than METASTASIO (1698-1782) delighted to write for the stage. PORPORA (1689-1767), a pupil of Scarlatti, and a man of high reputation, composed for Metastasio; "Ezio" and "Semiramide" were their joint productions. Porpora composed "Ariana e Teseo," and half a hundred other operas. But it is by his cantatas that he is best known. They are esteemed for the goodness of their recitatives, and the melody of their airs. He came to England, and attempted in vain to rival Handel. Of PEREZ, and HASSE, who at this time wrote many operas, only the sacred music is now remembered. SARRO composed "La Didone Abbandonata" to Metastasio's poetry. Nicolini, and Balgarni, sang in it. LEONARDO VINCI, for his "Catone in Utica." VINCI and L. LEO belong to the Neapolitan school, and were musicians of no mean talent. N. LOGROSCINO, of the same school, gave additional variety and effect to music, by the invention of finales; but his works have all been lost. Of PERGOLESI (1704-1737) more can be said. His first operas were comic; one of them, "La Serva padrona," was in great favor in Italy for many years. He composed the music to Metastasio's "Olympiade," but it met with complete neglect, and he nearly broke his heart. He died at the early age of 33. His sacred works are still more beautiful; his "Stabat Mater" most of all so. "Orfeo and Euridice," "Salve Regina," were others of his compositions. His sacred music is natural, and most expressive, though perhaps a little monotonous; but it is a faithful accompaniment to the words. With Pergolesi passed away from Italy to Germany the high culture of music. But very many composers followed him, in Italy, and deserve some mention. But, perhaps, it may be as well to add here some notes as to the structure of the opera at this time. The number of characters was generally limited to six, three of each sex—who were made always to be in love with one another. Each singer must have a principal air; the piece must be divided into three acts. There was a scena in the second and third acts, consisting of an accompanied recitative. There might be a duet; but there never was a trio, or other concerted piece. The air was divided into several kinds; the "aria Cantabile" was the pre-eminent one: its object is to express tenderness, and pleasing sadness. The "aria di portamento" was to display the singer's voice; and was to illustrate the opinion of the Italians that sound by itself, and itself, was the most beautiful of all sounds. The "aria di mezzo carattere" takes in all the medium feelings, and is "andante" time. The "aria parlante" expresses passion and agitation. The "aria di bravura," or "aria d'agilità," merely afford the singer an opportunity of displaying great powers of voice. The

effect of such airs is more often wonderful than beautiful. This classification of melody is, according to Hogarth, complete—and not capable of any improvement. Among those composers who tried to introduce German style in respect to vocal harmony and instrumental accompaniment, JOMELLI may be taken first in order (1714-1774). He wrote "L'errore amoroso," and "Odoardo," also "Achille in Seno," for Metastasio, whose favorite composer he became. This last, and "Armida," were successful; but "Demifonte," and "Ifigenia," in which he tried to introduce German peculiarities, failed entirely; and the music was termed "sclerata." His "Merope" is a good piece. All his works are full of elaborate counterpoint. GALUPPI composed for the church, the chamber, and the theatre. His influence was felt on English music. The air "How blest the maid," in "Love in a Village," is his. In his "Sofonisba" appeared, for the first time, the celebrated Gabrielli, who afterwards gained her laurels in the air "Son regina e sono amante," from Jomelli's "Didone." She came to London, and sang in Sacchini's "Didone," Piccini's "Cajo Mario," and Vento's "La Vestale." PICCINI wrote mostly comic operas. His "La Cecchina" is one of the most successful pieces ever published. He also composed "La buona figliuola" to Goldoni's words—who took the story from Richardson's "Pamela." The "Olympiade" of Metastasio was also set by him, as well as by Galuppi and Jomelli; but Piccini's version of the air "Se cenera, se dice," is considered the most beautiful, and the most expressive. SACCHINI, a genius equal to Piccini, came to England in 1772. By his great tact in discerning the peculiar qualities and power of each singer, he made every piece a work of merit. The air "Henry cull'd the flower's bloom," in Rosina, is a good specimen of his style. But in our country, and in France—for which he composed several of his best works—he is now quite forgotten. In Germany, his "Edipus zu Colonus" is still performed. PASSI-ELLO (1741-1816) was, like many other great musicians, educated at Naples. During an engagement in Russia, he composed "Il Babilone di Siviglia," and the comic intermezzo, "Il mondo nella Luna." In the service of Ferdinand IV., he composed "Il Pirro," remarkable as being the first serious opera, in which there were concerted finales. In "La Molinara," and "La Frascatana," Madame Catalani enchanted the English public; and in "La Pazzo per Amore," Madame Pasta. He spent some years in Paris, under the first Napoleon; and at Naples, under Joseph Bonaparte. But, at the fall of this family, he fell into neglect and poverty. He wrote about seventy-eight operas, eight intermezzi, and an immense number of oratorios and masses. His style is eminently simple; but yet to no composer more fully than to him may be applied the words of Carissimi—"Ah, questo facile quanto e difficile." His "Pazzo per Amore" will always gain a hearing as long as there is a singer worthy to take the part of Nina. Passiello introduced many improvements in orchestral composition: he introduced the viola, clarinet, and bassoon. CIMAROSA (1754-1801), after a visit to Russia, settled at Venice, under the Emperor Leopold, as director of the Italian opera. Here he composed his "Il Matrimonio Segreto." The reception of this piece was so unparalleled, that it had to be repeated the same night. His "Matrimonio per Sassuro," "La Penelope," "L'Olimpiade," and "Gli Orazi," are also thought very fine. The last is taken from Corneille's "Les Horaces," and is full of noble simplicity. The piece is so free from antiquated forms, that it wants nothing but an orchestral score of greater fullness and variety to satisfy the most modern ears. It is the finest tragic opera of the Italian school; just as "Il Matrimonio Segreto" is the finest comic. It is founded on our comedy of "The Clandestine Marriage," and has been performed lately by Grisi, Lablache, and Tamburini.

ZINGARELLI composed "Montezuma," and many other operas; but, after he succeeded Guglielmi in the chapel of the Vatican, he wrote only church music. His "Romeo e Giulietta" has been kept alive to the present time by the powers of Mme. Pasta. Mercedante, Donizetti, Bellini, were his pupils. His oratorio, "La Distruzione di Gerusalemme," is his finest ecclesiastic work. The interval from Zingarelli to Rossini was filled up by the career of S. MAYER, who composed "Medea," the scene of Mme. Pasta's greatest triumph; F. PAGER, who composed "La Griselda," "Camillo," and "Agnese;" and others. P. WINTER composed principally for the London stage. At the age of twenty, ROSSINI produced his "Tancredi," and established his fame. Before that, of the operas he had com-

posed, only "L'inganno felice" is known. He travelled about Italy, composing operas for the different theatres, and receiving £40 for each. He visited London and Paris. He is now thought to belong to the past, but still holds a high rank; and "La donna del Lago," "Guillaume Tell," "Otello," "La Gazza Ladra," "Mosé in Egitto," will long remain favorites on the stage. V. BELLINI'S (1806-1835) music made its way all over Europe. "Il Pirata" was his first successful opera. The libretto was written by the poet Romani, and Rubini first appeared in it. A number of similar works followed; of these, the best known are—"La Sonnambula," "Norma," and "I Puritani," with their soul-melting melodies. DONIZETTI was a most prolific writer. He produced in all sixty-four operas; the best of which are "Anna Bolena," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "La Favorite," "Linda da Chamouni," "La fille du Regiment," "Don Pasquale," "Betty," and "Maria di Rohan." Of these, the six latter far excel the others in solidity and strength; and as they were written near his end, it is to be regretted that Donizetti did not live longer, to develop his artistic powers. He was beginning to be influenced by the German school, and to improve much in his instrumentation and counterpoint. VERDI is most popular in Italy; though "I due Foscari," "Nabuco," and "I Lombardi," have been heard in other countries. Though the Italian opera still receives a great amount of support, and, with regard to this, is still in a most flourishing state, with reference to the quality of the productions it brings before its audience, it is in a stage of decay. Rossini's imitators have degraded the art, by copying from him what was most inartistic. They will all—Bellini, Ricci, Mercadante, Donizetti—sink into oblivion. The poetry, too, is at a low ebb; and, where this is the case, the dramatic excellence of the opera must be on the decline; and so it will continue, until some musician will arise who possesses sound views on art, together with a poet not afraid to commit himself by association with a genius equal to his own in a different walk. J. S.

—*London Musical Standard.*

What Hansliok says about Christine Nilsson.

The above eminent critic thus expresses himself, in the *Vienna Neue Freie Presse* of Jan. 7:—

"Christine Nilsson commenced her starring engagement at the Imperial Operahouse as Ophelia, in A. Thomas's *Hamlet*. A densely crowded house awaited her appearance with evident eagerness. The first view of her prepossessed them in her favor, and augured most auspiciously for the result. Mad. Nilsson has a tall, well-proportioned figure, a noble and finely chiselled countenance, in which two large light-blue eyes now touchingly glance, and now flash with passionate expression; her bearing is upright and calm, and every movement harmonious. She opens her lips, displaying her pearl-like teeth, and murmurs the first notes of the duet with *Hamlet*. In scarcely any other opera does the *prima donna* enter so unpretendingly as Ophelia enters in *Hamlet*; nay, strictly speaking, the entire first three acts constitute simply an humble and ungrateful introduction to the fourth act, which first permits the full development of the fair artist's musical and dramatic art. But even the little preliminary duet revealed Mad. Nilsson's marked and genuinely artistic individuality. No one can give the duet more unassumingly and simply, but no one can give it more effectively or with greater feeling. Her voice, a high soprano, bright, frank, and marvellously equal, does not possess imposing power, or even the first full freshness of youth, but, with its soft, pure, flute-like tones, it insinuates itself irresistibly into one's ear and heart. A slight veil rests upon the middle notes, as was the case with Jenny Lind, to whom Mad. Nilsson is linked not only by the same native land, but by the fundamental features of her musical nature. We like the soft, dull haze which is generally spread over voices destined to pour forth a rich store of deep feeling in song. In the second act, Ophelia has only one piece; Mad. Nilsson, with delicate tact, kept the two strophes of it, the first before, and the second after, *Hamlet*'s entrance, distinct from each other, and then found the most simple and most touching expression for her grief at his disappearance. The most simple and most touching expression—that is the talisman by means of which Mad. Nilsson everywhere and always captivates us, even when the composer does not come to her aid with any effect. Her action is limited to what is absolutely necessary, but it is conceived with the instinct of genius and perfectly realized. Surprisingly beautiful, true, and, at the same time, all her own, is her concep-

tion of the trio in the third act. It is by *Hamlet*'s crushing adjuration: 'Get thee to a nunnery!' that Ophelia is first driven to the brink of insanity, and it is here that Mad. Nilsson suggests the first approach of the mental night which encompasses Ophelia in the fourth act. In the great scene of the fourth act, Christine Nilsson displayed the highest virtuosity which we can conceive in so tragic a situation; virtuosity which we do not notice, bravura which we forget, on account of the profound feeling in which every note is steeped. All those who, from numerous accounts, had expected merely a great virtuosa, now beheld—a great artist. Thanks to the most expressive mimetic talent, action, and tone-coloring. Mad. Nilsson succeeded in supplying a dramatic motive for isolated florid passages, of greater or less length, apparently dedicated to *bravura* alone—they gushed forth from Ophelia's soul, and not simply from her throat. Ophelia thoroughly corresponds to Mad. Nilsson's whole appearance and style of singing, and, therefore, it would be dangerous to hazard a conclusive judgment on the lady from this one part. How far her power of dramatic metamorphosis extends, and whether she will be equally successful in infusing her tender and dreamily gentle individuality into other characters, is something which time alone can show. One thing meanwhile is certain: We never met a more perfectly poetic incarnation of Ophelia, and probably never shall. We look forward to Mad. Nilsson's next performances with joyous expectation such as we have not experienced in operatic matters for a long time."

Joachim at Stuttgart.

Which of us would ever have thought that any one could fill up a programme with nothing but violin pieces and that we should sit and listen, as we were accustomed to sit and listen for whole evenings to pianoforte music? Certainly it was possible only for such an artist as Joachim to play every piece without resting. And what playing! During a period of fifteen years we have heard all the violinists of importance who have appeared at concerts here, and there are not a few. How often, too, have we not been carried away and had our enthusiasm excited by the magnificent performance of our great artist, Singer! But who will, who can, contradict us when we boldly assert that Joachim, the "King of Violinists," surpasses them all—all! Of the brilliant qualities which adorn this unique artist—powerful tone, grandiose execution, blameless correctness, grand repose, and deep feeling—of these qualities this or that violinist may possess one or the other; but never, never before have we heard them all so closely connected and so thoroughly blended in the same person. Joachim is, our ideal picture of a great violinist. If we think of the different pieces he played, what shall we say and where shall we begin? With the exception of his own Romance, we were familiar with all the pieces, down to the smallest details, and we know the passages which Joachim played differently—differently, indeed, from the way in which he had heard them played. How marvellously lovely was the second movement of Beethoven's C minor Sonata, and how charming the scherzo of the same piece! If in the Barcarolle by Spohr, the Sarabande by Leclair, the Romance by Beethoven, the first movement of the "Devil's Sonata," by Tartini, and, also, in his own Romance, the artist displayed his greatness in the sustained style, he shone in Spohr's Scherzo, Leclair's "Tambourin," the "Devil's Sonata," and the piquant Hungarian Dances (arranged likewise by Brahms for four hands), by his wondrous execution, by a staccato which cannot be surpassed, and at the same time by his astounding composure. Through all he does there runs something which we shall never hear in so great a degree again, a charm which seizes powerfully on every heart; this is the wonderful singing of the violin, or, in a word, what we call soul. To play with soul is not a thing which can be learned; it is a gift from heaven. Lucky is he who possesses it, and lucky is he, too, who can listen to it. If a never-ending, constantly-recommencing storm of applause was ever justifiable, it was so on this occasion. Of this let Joachim rest assured. Professor Pruckner played the pianoforte part of the C minor Sonata in a finished manner. The accompaniment to the other pieces was confided to Herr Hirschberger, of Berlin, who knows what accompanying really means. Such self-effacement to the advantage of the soloist is rare. —*Stuttgart Augenblick.*

The Opera-House Bubble.

MAURICE STRAKOSCH'S DREAMS OF A GREAT TEMPLE OF MUSIC—WHY HIS VISIONS CAME TO NAUGHT.

For a considerable time journals of this and other cities have been publishing accounts of a wonderful opera-house, of enormous dimensions, and appointed in the most complete and costly manner, to be built by Maurice Strakosch, on land owned by the Harlem Railroad Company, at Forty-third street and Madison ave., from funds placed at his disposal by prominent capitalists. After his unprofitable venture last fall with Mlle. Belocca, in this city, Mr. Strakosch took her West on a starring trip. A gentleman familiar with musical enterprises in this

country said yesterday: "Mr. Strakosch seemed to have opera houses on the brain." He proposed to build one for the music-lovers of Chicago, and another for those of San Francisco. The local papers described his projects, and in some instances strongly supported them. Upon his return to New York he revived a plan which he is said to have had in mind for a considerable time, and announced the erection of the structure above referred to. His proposals were on so magnificent a scale that most persons suspected the airy nature of the foundations, and expected to see the "insubstantial pagant" fade away. It was, however, asserted that the ground had been purchased, and the amount paid for it was named. There is probably no doubt that negotiations were entered into with William H. Vanderbilt, through George C. Sherwood of the Fifth Avenue Bank. It is now claimed that the chance was lost through the indiscreet announcement that the purchase of the land was secured.

Persons, however, well acquainted with Mr. Strakosch, say that his disposition is so sanguine as to be essentially visionary, and that there was never the slightest real prospect that the money for the erection of the opera-house would be secured. They add that his tendency to business mistakes is so well known that the enterprise conducted by him could not have gained credit and support. There seem to be two views regarding the matter. Many persons, while doubting the feasibility of the plan, do not question Mr. Strakosch's sincerity, and believe that he really expected to be able to provide the city with an opera-house corresponding in size and elegant completeness to his ambition. They say that the actual beginning of negotiations for the land would surely indicate so much. On the other hand, persons perhaps as well acquainted with the manager, some of whom have had various business transactions with him, state that he merely blew a bubble which burst sooner than he expected. They assign several reasons why he should desire to create the impression that he was about to build a large opera-house in this city. Mr. Mapleson, of London, will probably bring his opera company to New York next fall, after the close of the London season. It is said that Mr. Strakosch is jealous of all operatic enterprises with which he is not connected, and that he has frequently given foreign managers to understand that they could do nothing in this country without his co-operation, stating that the American public would support no company without his name as a guarantee. Those who take this view of the matter believe that Mr. Strakosch desired either to frighten Mapleson from the field or into combining forces with him. Moreover, it is asserted that he owes large sums of money in London and Paris, and that his debts in those cities, besides rendering his presence there personally unpleasant, render it impossible for him to make further contracts with leading foreign singers.

Mr. Kingsland, of the Academy of Music, says: "Although Mr. Strakosch has been very liberally treated by us, he claims to believe that we have in some respects used him hardly. He has always complained that it was unfair that his receipts should be so largely reduced by the free admittance of those owning boxes. I think this has had influence with him in the announcement of a project for a new opera-house. Perhaps he expected us to make him still further concessions. The singular part of it is that one feature of his plan was a large number of boxes to be subscribed for in advance by wealthy gentlemen, and owned by them, with the same privileges of admittance which those owning boxes at the Academy of Music enjoy."

Those who laugh at the whole enterprise claim that it was ridiculous on the face of it. It had been demonstrated that opera-houses were not a profitable investment in this city. The Academy always wavered between slight gains and heavy losses, sometimes losing \$10,000 in one year. What ground then was there for believing that a building costing, according to the announcement, about \$2,000,000, could ever be made to pay?

There were many, a gentleman remarked, who would regret to learn that Mr. Strakosch's project had fallen through—persons who had not realized the obstacles in the way of erecting so costly a place of amusement, and merely thought of it as an elegant addition to the city and a pleasant place to spend an evening. Those, however, possessing some experience in opera management, and many more who foresaw no possible return for money thus invested, had never expected to see the walls rise, and would therefore not be disappointed at never sitting within them. —*New York Tribune.*

Pianists as Advertising Agents.

"The Contributors' Club" in the last number of the *Atlantic Monthly* contains, among other things, the following:

An Arcadian thinker might imagine that the piano-forte was an instrument invented and made solely to further the ends of the art of music. I have no doubt that some such idea existed in the brains of the first inventors and makers of the instrument. Piano-forte makers, indeed, still vie with one another in making more or less successful attempts at improving the instrument, and pianists are certainly not behindhand in pushing the art of playing upon it to its uttermost limits. But Music, after innocently dreaming for years that all these commendable endeavors were made in her service, has awakened to the fact that she and her servants have in some unaccountable way exchanged places; that the piano-forte has been the while cunningly binding her, hand and foot, and now asserts its own mastership in a very loud, jingling manner. Pianists who have done their utmost to fit themselves for the service of Art, perhaps even to be the high priests in her temple, and who naturally look upon the piano-forte as *their* servant, now find themselves in the incongruous position of mere advertising agents for the manufacturers. Before going into details, I will give two anecdotes, which I know to be true.

Some years ago a gentleman of my acquaintance was walking in the streets of Bonn on the Rhine with one of the leading London pianists. They were met at a street corner by a man who had a few minutes' conversation with the pianist; after he had gone away, the pianist said to our friend, "That was a member of the firm of —, in —, in the United States. He has just renewed an offer he made me yesterday of — dollars per month, with all my expenses paid, to give a series of concerts in America with his firm's piano-fortes." The second story is this. Not many years ago a well-known impresario brought a concert troupe to America, one of the members of which was a pianist of some note in England. After a month the pianist severed his connection with the troupe and returned to England. To fill his place the impresario engaged a distinguished American pianist for a certain number of concerts. The pianist expressing a decided preference for the A piano-fortes, the manager said that it was perfectly immaterial to him what instruments were used at his concerts. The next day, thinking over his engagements, the pianist remembered that, somehow or other, nothing had been said about how much he was to be paid; so he called upon the manager.

"You must be the most confiding of men! Here you have engaged me for so many concerts, and have not even asked what my terms are!"

"Well! I am sure I don't see what I have to do with that."

"I should imagine that, as you are to pay me, it might be of some importance to you to know how much I ask."

"I pay you? Nothing of the sort! Mr. A pays you, as you use his piano-fortes."

"You had better see Mr. A before we go any further; for I am sure he will not agree to that arrangement."

"You are joking! I have given concerts in this country for the last ever-so-many years, and have never paid pianists a single cent in my life. The piano-forte makers *always* pay them."

It was found, however, that Mr. A, although perfectly willing to furnish instruments, charge and carriage free, would not agree to pay anything. He knew that it was the custom of many makers to do so, but he had never done it, and never would. The manager was in a huge rage, cut down his engagement with the pianist to five nights, and on paying him, vowed that he had never been so swindled in his life.

The custom of piano-forte makers' paying pianists to play exclusively upon their instruments has, it must be admitted, one good side. Very probably many of the great pianists who have visited this country would never have come here at all, except for the enterprise of piano-forte makers in bringing them for their own ends. In the beginning, when the public did not know, or care to inquire, about the practice, the "preference" of a great pianist for one piano-forte over all others was a most capital advertisement for the maker. But now that every one knows perfectly well that it is a mere matter of business contract, and that pianists play upon a certain firm's piano-fortes simply because

they are hired to do so, and not because they prefer to do so, the excellence of the arrangement as an advertisement consists solely in the A, B, or C piano-forte's standing on the platform at concerts with the maker's name, in large gilt letters, staring the audience out of countenance, and doing its best to put all thoughts of music to flight and impress the public with the all-important fact of its existence. The evils of the system are great. I saw the other day a letter from a noted pianist to the president of one of our musical societies, somewhat to this effect (I quote from memory): "I find myself in a very strange position. I am under contract to Mr. A to play only upon his piano-fortes. I cannot play at the X concerts in Baltimore, because they use only the B piano-fortes; I cannot play at the Y concerts in Cincinnati, because they use only the C piano-fortes; it is the same thing with the Z or W concerts in New York and Philadelphia, where the D and E piano-fortes are used. Unless your society and Mr. F are willing to let me play on the A instrument, I do not see how I can play at your concerts either." Here you see how a pianist can be debarr'd from a most important musical field all over the country, and the public deprived of the pleasure of hearing him except under very narrow conditions. The fault, no doubt, lies with the pianists themselves who enter upon such engagements. And yet the yearly income of only too many American pianists would be seriously affected for the worse if they did not make these very pernicious contracts with manufacturers.

Musical Correspondence.

NEW YORK, FEB. 12. In reviewing that portion of my last letter which relates to the performance of Mr. B. J. Lang, at one of our Philharmonic concerts, the *Journal* disputes not only the justice of my opinion, but also the candor of my statement, assuming it to be colored by local prejudice. In the brief paragraph which is called in question I did not attempt to discuss the general merits or demerits of Mr. Lang's playing; had I done so I should have found much to commend. His high reputation as a musician and a pianist is known to all the readers of the *Journal*; therefore when he played the Concerto of Saint Sæns, as I think badly, I felt no hesitation in saying so. In forming this opinion I had the advantage of a comparison, which, although it may be odious, is inevitable. In my letter I said that Mr. Lang had the disadvantage of appearing after Mme. Essipoff, who played the same concerto at Steinway Hall on the evening previous. Under other circumstances my opinion of Mr. Lang's performance might have been modified. As it was, I found his conception of the work entirely different from hers, and very weak compared with the magnetic and brilliant interpretation which I had in mind. In point of execution too he seemed unable fairly to meet and master the mechanical difficulties of the composition. Having these impressions it became my duty to state them and I did so, I am confident, in exactly the same spirit in which I should have written of one of our resident artists, not forgetting that in Art there is neither time nor place.

I resume my concert record with the fourth Symphony concert by Theo. Thomas, on Feb. 3d. The bill was as follows:

Suite, No. 3, in D.....Bach
Overture—Air—Gavotte—Bourrée—Gigue.
Symphony, No. 6, in F, Op. 68.....Beethoven
Siegfried's Death, and Finale, from the *Götterdämmerung*.....Wagner

The Suite in D is one of those charming diversions of a great genius which serve to delight both the cultivated and the popular ear. The musician finds in it a noble symmetry of form, harmonious and consistent development of ideas, fertility of melodic invention, matchless skill in counterpoint, everything at the best; while the average hearer is captivated by its very simplicity and listens with

respect and pleasure if not with understanding. Good seed must be sown when such music is played, and Mr. Thomas has frequently performed portions of this suite in his lighter and miscellaneous programmes. Of the performance of this music I cannot speak too highly. During the earlier part of the season the playing of the orchestra, although fine, fell somewhat short of the high standard which had been maintained for several years previous. Good reasons for this were not lacking. A few of the best players were missing from the ranks; and the concerts, which had before taken place in regular and constant succession both in summer and winter, were sadly broken up last season. It would have been ungraceful to criticize such shortcomings as were plainly due to a lack of the usual constant practice, particularly as Mr. Thomas was in no wise to be blamed for this, the fault being in the people of New York who have failed to provide for him a suitable concert room. The performance of the Bach suite however was faultless, and the same may be said of the Beethoven Symphony. I have never heard the orchestra play better. The Pastoral Symphony, though not written in Beethoven's greatest style, will always be a particular favorite in the concert room and it is one of those works which we would not willingly miss hearing at least once every season. Its interest, too, is quite independent of its descriptive character in the ordinary sense of the term, although the scene by the brook, the country merry-making and thunder storm are very ingeniously suggested, without any theatrical or common-place effects, unless the imitation of the cuckoo-song is open to that objection. The merit of the work lies in the treatment of the varied and graceful themes by which one is led from the very beginning by a succession of delightful changes to the perfect climax in the Allegretto of the last movement. One feels that all the foregoing portion of the work, beautiful as it is, is only preparatory to this Allegretto, which is in itself one of the finest and most effective pieces of composition on record.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary to write something about the *Götterdämmerung* of Richard Wagner, the critic has no easy task. There are two kinds of critics now, those who have been to Bayreuth, and those who have not been there. Those who have made the pilgrimage are easily recognized; when Wagner's music is performed they look very wise, nod approvingly, and talk of dramatic unity and the like; while the unfortunate beings who have remained at home can only listen and bite their thumbs, regarding the music in somewhat the same light in which the heathen is said to view his idol; "he knows that it is ugly, but he feels that it is great."

The selections which formed the second part of the programme opened with the Funeral music which occurs in the opera when the body of Siegfried is borne by his companions back to the Hall of the Gibichunga. This music is very impressive and, with its proper dramatic accessories, must produce a great effect. The orchestral part which followed is the accompaniment of the intermediate action of the drama leading to Brünnhilde's song of lamentation over the body of her husband. This song and the remainder of Brünnhilde's music was rendered by Mme. Eugénie Pappenheim, who acquitted herself remarkably well notwithstanding the difficulty of the music, which is written with an utter disregard for the capability of the human voice. The orchestral performance was magnificent and this fact was felt and appreciated by the audience, as was shown by the hearty applause given at the close, very little of which, I fear, was due to the music alone. A. A. C.

CHICAGO, FEB. 6.—During the long interim in this correspondence, the Liebling recitals came and went, the Essipoff season, and the opening of the Hershey Music Hall.

Mr. Liebling's recitals (three in number) brought an interesting and very trying selection of pieces, including the Liszt transcriptions of the great Bach Fugues in G minor, and A minor; the Reinecke Concerto in F-sharp; the Chopin Concerto in F minor; a part of the Schumann "Kreisleriana;" the Liszt "Hexameron," etc. In all these, as well as in the smaller things intervening, he showed himself the possessor of a splendid technique and of considerable musical feeling. He plays Bach extremely well, making it interesting (where Essipoff made it charming). I do not find Mr. Liebling distinctively a poetic player—though this may be my own fault.

We also have had the pleasure of hearing the fair Russian pianiste. She has played here seven times, with I suppose her usual programmes. Her first season here was Jan. 8, 10, 12, and 13. Her last, Jan. 29, 31, and Feb. 2. As her first programme brought the Beethoven Sonata, Op. 53, and the Schubert Air and Variations (*Impromptu*), we had at the very beginning the faults which you had pointed out in Boston, brought prominently before us. On the other hand the Tausig arrangement of the Bach Toccata brought her in her better light. Why she should bring out the melody so over-much is certainly a mystery. But that she does so was uniformly noticed by good judges. Certainly she is a beautiful player. In point of elegance and refinement and finish of playing I doubt whether we have had her superior. During her last season here she played the Saint-Saëns Concerto, and Chopin's in E minor, with second piano. In both these, I need not say, she was all that could have been desired. On the other hand she gave a very shabby performance of the Liszt-Wagner *Tannhäuser* March, and a rendering of the Liszt second Rhapsody that was little better.

In summing all up the *Tribune* critic (who is not only the leading authority here, but one of the very best critics on the daily press in America) gave Essipoff the credit of having sounded "the whole gamut of piano music." She gave of Beethoven only two pieces: the C-sharp minor Sonata, Op. 27, and that in C, Op. 53; and of Chopin only three important pieces: the Polonaise in A flat, the Barcarolle, and Concerto in E minor; and of Schumann nothing great (the *Carnaval* being chief); while her selections of virtuosic tasks were not at all copious. Considering this, I find it difficult to agree with the *Tribune*. To my mind the gamut here sounded seems strangely lacking in the more weighty and profound notes.

As I mentioned before, the Hershey Music Hall was opened Jan. 23 and 25, with local assistance, and Miss Draedit of New York and Mr. Wm. H. Sherwood of Boston. Mr. Sherwood made a fine impression on the public and critics, except on one of the morning papers, whose critic accorded him a fine technique but denied everything else—especially any musical quality in his playing! This entire criticism was one of the most sagaciously wrong-headed pieces of writing I ever saw, and I regret that I haven't it by me for the sake of some extracts.

My own opinion is that in Mr. Sherwood you have a treasure. For although it is plain enough that he is not yet mature, there are such decidedly good qualities in him that I cannot but hope his name is to be added to the small but creditable list of American pianists who play good music well—at the head of which stands the name of Julia Rivé. If we had ten such players, or rather ten unlike players of equal excellence, music would become better known and loved here. What I liked about Sherwood was his clean playing and his original and interesting readings, together with his fine touch. As a composer, his notions of form seem rather misty, but the ideas are many of them fresh and freshly treated. In the way of virtuosic playing I have seldom heard better work than his performances of the Liszt-Wagner "Tannhäuser" march, and the "Isolden's Liebes-Tod," the latter in particular being extremely impressive.

The older I get the more artistic it seems to me to open a piano-concert with something from Bach. Not entirely for the reason I once heard assigned, that "anything sounds well after Bach"—though this also is not without weight. But because, owing to the intellectual interest of the Bach pieces (especially the great Liszt transcriptions), a pianist can fully absorb himself in them and produce a certain effect upon the audience, without depending on a fortunate emotional state which may or may not come. After the ice is once broken in this way, everything warms up. I noticed this again in Essipoff's concert, opening with the Bach-Tausig "Toccata," and in Sherwood's Bach-Liszt G-minor Fugue, as well as in Mr. Liebling's example with the two Bach pieces. Never-

theless it is indispensable to the success of such an experiment that the Bach selection be of a decided and pronounced flavor. To open with such a piece as the long and rather monotonous prelude to the third English Suite (as Mr. Liebling did once) is to miss it in a concert.

The Hershey Music Hall is 70x80 ft., and seats eight hundred. It is an elegant and every way attractive place, and located in the very heart of the city. The organ is now going in, and when done I will speak of it.

Next week we have the concert of the Apollo Club, this time with a mixed chorus. They give Bach's "Let us wrestle and Pray," Schubert's 23rd Psalm, and so on, with Miss Rivé for solo pianist. For their third concert they give "St. Paul" with orchestra.

I came near forgetting the first concert of the Chicago Philharmonic Society, which came about two weeks ago. The principal numbers were the Weber "Jubilee" Overture, the Chopin F minor Concerto (by Miss Bertha Burg), Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and a Meyerbeer *Fackellanz*. The orchestra numbered about forty, under the direction of Mr. A. Liesegang, who seems to have something in him; the playing was good for the first concert. The Concerto was rather thin, the young lady being not yet a virtuoso. The audience was small, but I hope they'll try it again. Meanwhile I remain

DER FREYSCHUETZ.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, FEB. 17, 1877.

Concerts.

HARVARD MUSICAL ASSOCIATION. It is safe to say, that not half a dozen finer concerts of orchestral music have been heard at any time in Boston, than the sixth Symphony Concert, which occurred on Thursday afternoon, Feb. 1. The audience was larger than usual, and the satisfaction universal. This was owing partly to the happy construction of the programme; partly to the excellent manner in which nearly every number of it was performed; and partly to the fresh attraction of a peculiarly interesting singer. So far, then, as it concerns the instrumental pieces, it is enough simply to record the programme with little or no special comment.

Overture to "Medea".....Bargiel
Recit. & Aria, with chorus of Priestesses, from
Gluck's "Iphigenia in Tauris" (Miss FANNY KELLOGG);
Symphony No. 8 in F. Beethoven.—PART II.
Female Chorus, in three parts, with Orchestra, from
Cherubini's "Blanche de Provence" (pupils of Mme.
RUDERSDORFF); Piano Concerto in G minor, Saint-
Saëns, (B. J. LAX); Song, Miss KELLOGG; Over-
ture to "Fidelio," in E, No. 4, Beethoven.

Miss Nita Gaetano.
Symphony, in A major ("Italian," No. 4, Mendelssohn
Allegro vivace—Andante—Menuetto—Saltarello.
Aria and Gigue, from the Orchestral Suite in D, J. S. Bach
Songs, with Pianoforte:—
a. "Ogni Pena".....Pergolesi
b. "Barcarolle".....Gordigiani
c. "Au Printemps".....Gounod

Overture to "Leonore," No. 3, in C.....Beethoven
Bargiel's *Medea* Overture is one of the best products of the modern school, and it improves on repetition. The theme is tragical and sombre, to be sure; but the work is not monotonous, and in the development has not a few strong points of interest, as well as complete artistic unity. The genial grace and sunshine of the "Italian" Symphony was in welcome contrast, and we know not when we have heard it more delicately or appreciatively reproduced. The exquisite beauty and the sweet, deep tender feeling of the Aria by Bach were not at all dulled by familiarity. The *Gigue*, which was given instead of the usual *Gavotte*, has much of the same hearty, sturdy jollity; but this, we own, did suffer somewhat in the execution; more rehearsal would have made it clearer. And what could have ended such a concert with the certainty of holding every listener to the last chord, but the great *Leonore* Overture? The only want felt in the bringing out was of a much greater mass of strings for the immense *crescendo* near the close.

MISS NITA GAKTANO, if not quite equal to the inspired and thrilling passion of the great Aria in

Fidelio, being alike in voice and style and nature of a gentler character, and losing confidence a little at the start, nevertheless showed a true conception of the task, and sang it artistically, with a fine sentiment and faultless taste. For she has a lovely voice, of very sympathetic quality, rich and evenly developed, trained in the best school; her execution is exquisitely finished and refined in the best sense, free from every affectation. And the good impression is helped by the quiet, serious, modest manner, which is as much a part of her as her own rich Southern beauty. It is not at all a "stage manner," but that of the drawing room and home of true refinement. Strength was the main thing wanting; feeling, expression, taste were there, and every tone was pure and sweet and musical. But in those passages where the voice rushes upward to a thrilling climax, the ear sometimes lost the intermediate notes before the splendid tone was reached. To be sure, the orchestra is very full here, and it could hardly be more subdued than it was and yet be what Beethoven meant. The choice of such an aria certainly did honor to the artistic aspiration of the singer.—But what was wanting here was more than made good in the songs she sang with the inspiring accompaniment of Mr. DRESKEL. Here she was in her element and sang with a charming freedom and with fervor. The group was changed somewhat; the song by Pergolesi was dropped out, and she began with the graceful Barcarolle by Gordigiani; then the "Au Printemps" by Gounod; and for a third, another Barcarolle, or rather Gondolier's song, by Meyerbeer, a quaint and subtle blending of sentiment and humor. The applause was more and more enthusiastic after each little piece, and finally she was obliged to reappear and sing again the song by Gounod.

So general was the desire to hear Miss Gaetano once more before her return to England, that Miss Fanny Kellogg obligingly made place for her last Thursday, postponing her own appearance till the next (eighty) concert, March 1, for which the programme is as follows:

PART I. Overture to "Iphigenia in Aulis," Gluck;
Recit. and Aria, with chorus of Priestesses, from
Gluck's "Iphigenia in Tauris" (Miss FANNY KELLOGG);
Symphony No. 8 in F. Beethoven.—PART II.
Female Chorus, in three parts, with Orchestra, from
Cherubini's "Blanche de Provence" (pupils of Mme.
RUDERSDORFF); Piano Concerto in G minor, Saint-
Saëns, (B. J. LAX); Song, Miss KELLOGG; Over-
ture to "Fidelio," in E, No. 4, Beethoven.

SHERWOOD RECITALS. The fourth (Feb. 2) had the most interesting programme so far, namely:

Concerto, C minor, for two pianos and string instruments.....J. S. Bach
Mrs. and Mr. Sherwood, and Messrs. Bernhard Listemann, F. Listemann, Ad. Belz and Ad. Hartleben.
Of the Boston Philharmonic Club.
Four Songs.....Edw. Grieg
Miss Julie W. Thornton.
"Kreutzer" Sonata, for piano and violin, Op. 47, Beethoven
Mr. Sherwood and Mr. R. Listemann.
a. *Impromptu*, F minor, Op. 142 No. 4. Schubert
Mrs. and Mr. Sherwood, and Messrs. Bernhard Listemann, F. Listemann, Ad. Belz and Ad. Hartleben.
b. "Kassandra," Op. 44, No. 1 (mein Buhle war er! und er hat mich sehr geliebt).....A. Jensen
c. Etude, F sharp major, Op. 1, No. 1.....Carl Tausig
Mrs. Sherwood.
Song. Selected. Miss Thornton.
a. Sonata, F minor (arr. by Tausig) Allegro vivacissimo.....Scarlatti
b. Nocturne, C minor, Op. 48.....Chopin
Mr. Sherwood.
Quintet, E flat major, Op. 44.....Robert Schumann
Mrs. Sherwood, and Messrs. Listemann, etc.

The Bach Concerto, a cheerful, wholesome, everyday sort of composition (but Bach's every day is something finer than a common mortal's or musician's best),—a work full of vigor and of life, the best of tonics at the beginning of a feast, was brilliantly and clearly executed, although we felt some lack of poetic sentiment and shading in the slow middle movement. The two movements of the "Kreutzer" Sonata were superbly played, especially the contrasted variations of the Adagio. Of Mrs. Sherwood's group of pianoforte solos the Schubert *Impromptu* was incomparably the most in-

teresting, and was played with a piquancy and grace quite captivating. The "Kassandra" piece (whatever the name may mean) seemed to be a passionate lament of love bereft, of whose merit we are not prepared to judge. It was expressively rendered. The *Etude* by Tausig, a turbulent and rapid stream of crowded and strange harmonies, appeared to have no motive for its existence but the heaping up of difficulties, which verily the lady overcame with thoroughness and a sufficient show of ease to make it not seem painful. Mr. SHERWOOD's solos, particularly that fine Nocturne by Chopin, were among his happiest interpretations. But the great feature of the programme—pity only that it came so late (the concert was too long)—was the Schumann Quintet, an inspired creation from the beginning to the end. In her rendering of this Mrs. Sherwood placed herself in her best light as a competent and conscientious artist; it was spirited and effective throughout, with good light and shade; and that the strings did well their part may pass without saying.

Miss THORNTON has a clear and pleasing voice, of good power; but her singing was crude, and without life or particular expression; nor were the songs selected of much interest in themselves.—The fifth and last Recital will be on the 23d of this month.

FOSTER CLUB. Choral societies, or clubs, of mixed voices, till recently so rare, are getting to be the order of the day. But the Foster Club is older than most of them, only it has courted the shade. The first concert of its ninth season, before invited friends, took place at Mechanics Hall on Friday evening, Feb. 2. Adhering to its chosen specialty, that of studying and bringing out new music, it had for the main features of the programme the Thirteenth Psalm by Liszt, and a setting of "John Gilpin," the whole poem, as a Cantata for Solos and Chorus, by Thomas Anderton, besides a sprinkling of part-songs and solos also new to most of us.

The Psalm by Liszt, opening with the Tenor solo (finely sung by Dr. LANGMAID) is a characteristically strange and overstrained production. The anguish and the agony out of which it cries: "Lord, for how long wilt thou forget me," is more distressful, more intense, than Music ever dreamed of when she, heavenly Maid, was young; this is turning the "grossen Schmerzen" into "Lieder" with a vengeance, aggravating every pang. There are some grand and brilliant passages, however; particularly those clear, bright Soprano harmonies (reminding you of the "Holy, holy" in *Elijah*) near the beginning; and it ends more cheerfully with song of praise. But as a whole the work impressed us as disjointed, wilful, forced, and fatiguingly long.

As for the English setting of "John Gilpin," it is a long piece of musical ready writing, with very few signs of real musical *vis comica*, though it has some graceful and effective numbers. The humor seemed to lie entirely in the words; it needed a fellow like Rossini to better them by music. The singing of the chorus was throughout excellent, reflecting credit on the conductorship of Mr. G. E. WHITING. The solos, too, by Mrs. H. F. KNOWLES, Miss ITA WELSH, Mr. CYRUS BRIGHAM and Dr. E. C. BULLARD, were all well given. Indeed the choral work throughout the evening was of a superior order; although the body of sopranos sounded a little harsh in comparison with those of the Cecilia, nor was the chorus large enough for the full effect of the Liszt Psalm.

The part-songs were: "We roam and rule the Sea," by Henry Leslie, and "When hands meet," by Pinsuti,—both nicely sung, the latter encored. "Guinevere," a Contralto song, by Arthur Sullivan, was given with intelligent expression by a young lady with a clear and telling voice, Miss FLORENCE HOLMES; and Dr. Langmaid sang "Stars of the Summer Night," by Berthold Tours, in a very tasteful manner.

SANDERS THEATRE, CAMBRIDGE. The fourth subscription concert (Feb. 8) proved the most attractive of the season, judging from the very few seats unoccupied, and the programme was of the best. It began with the posthumous Quartet by Schubert, in

D minor, of which only the dirge-like second movement (*Andante con moto*), with its fine variations, had become in any degree familiar here. But the first *Allegro*, and the *Scherzo*, and the *Presto*, too, are full of fire and beauty and of the imaginative quality; so that the whole work is one of Schubert's best, while far less than most of them it is open to the charge of prolixity. It was exquisitely rendered by the brothers Listemann and Messrs. Belz and Hartdegen. Next came a Mendelssohn part-song for male voices: "Waken, lords and ladies gay," from Walter Scott, sung with spirit and precision under the direction of Mr. G. L. Osgood. This was followed by a Violoncello solo, a sweet cantabile melody, by Huber, in which Mr. Hartdegen distinguished himself by the remarkable richness, purity and sympathetic, searching quality of his tone, as well as by his tasteful and expressive phrasing; we have few such masters of this eminently human instrument, which we always prefer to hear in its own native character, and not when scrambling through difficulties in imitation of less noble instruments. Gade's "Water Lily," a part-song for mixed voices, exhibited Mr. Osgood's choir (of about a hundred) in the best light. We never heard so large a body of tone so fresh and sweet and pure, without the least perceptible alloy; and never better blending, finer shading, or more fine-felt individualization, yet perfect interweaving, of the parts; truly our Cecilia must look to her laurels!

The great Schumann Quintet, in E flat, of which we have just before had occasion to speak, introduced Mme. Madeline Schiller, with the Listemann party. Her execution was most brilliant, surpassing in the *Scherzo* anything that we have heard; more sure and finished technique one could hardly wish; and yet of the poetic, vital quality we have heard more from some whose fingers were less equal to it. There were moreover now and then accelerations and retardations, to which no amount of brilliancy or fluency can altogether reconcile us. Even more of this we felt in her otherwise extremely beautiful performance of the Chopin Polonaise in E-flat (Op. 22); why Polonaise, why any dance at all, if rhythm is to know no law?

The remainder of the programme consisted of part-songs: viz., a "Night Song" by Franz, for male Quartet and chorus, in which Mr. Osgood's own voice told with remarkable effect; "Birdling," by Rubinstein, a two-part chorus for Soprano and Contralto voices, with String quartet and imitative flute obligato, a very bright and pleasing piece; and, for conclusion of the whole, Mendelssohn's "Early Spring," for mixed voices. This was the first public effort of the new chorus, and seemed very like the germ of a fair future.

HARP RECITALS. One element of no small interest, for years but little represented in our music, has reappeared among us lately in the person of Mr. APTOMMAS, one of the most gifted and accomplished harpists living, and who still asserts all his old mastery over this difficult and now rare instrument. He is a Welshman, who seems born to this art, and he does wonders with it. His execution, as well as his range of subjects, seems unbounded; witness the following programme, one of three, which he performed a few weeks since in a series of matinées in Mason and Hamlin's Organ Ware Rooms:

Preludes..... Miscellaneous
Moonlight Sonata..... Beethoven
Adagio—Allegretto—Trio—Presto—Agitato.
English Melodies: "The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington," "The Curly-headed Plough-boy,"
"Come Lassies and Lads," "The Sailor's Hornpipe," and "Jack's the Lad"..... Aptommas
La Source, (Moreau Characteristique)..... Rumenthal
Grand Fantasia on Themes from Montecchi e Capuletti..... Alvares
Home, Sweet Home..... Aptommas
a. Songs without Words, (Duet and Spring Song), Mendelssohn
b. Harmonious Blacksmith..... Handel
Sounds from Home..... Aptommas
"Codlad yr Haul," "Rhyfeygyrch Gwyr Harlech," "Ab Shenkin."

His preluding was wonderfully clever. It was a bold undertaking to play the "Moonlight Sonata" on the harp; but he did it, accurately and completely, though the work of course lost much by the transcription. The Adagio suffered particularly, sounding in parts feeble and confused, while there seemed to be a practical difficulty in rendering the pointed notes. The middle movement came out with a clearness which we had not thought possible, and so did portions of the very swift finale. But what proved to us most fresh, and seemed most in the character of the instrument, was the medley of old English melodies. He played other Sonatas in the following recitals.

Mr. ERNST PERABO gave an extra Chamber Concert (the fourth of his eleventh season) in Wesleyan Hall, on Friday afternoon, Feb. 9. The room was crowded to a degree more flattering to the artist than comfortable to his audience. The programme had the usual fault of extreme length, aggravated by the strain it costs to hear rightly, and with endeavor to appreciate, so many new things in immediate succession. We think the generous ardor of the interpreter carries him a little too far in this direction, defeating its own end. He would be hospitable to new composers; he would gratify our natural curiosity about their works. Excellent motives both; but a whole concert full of new and by no means simple things becomes a surfeit to the passive listener, while it seems short enough to the performer in the actual work and glow of reproduction.

Mr. Perabo's programme this time included Preludes and Fugues, Nos. 21 and 8, Book 1, Bach; Larghetto and Scherzo, for piano, violin, and cello, op. 30 (new), J. K. Paine; Berceuse, op. 50, No. 5, Rubinstein, arranged for strings; Trio, No. 4, for piano, violin and cello, op. 158, Raff (first time); Posthumous quartet movement (Allegro assai) in C minor, Schubert; Concerto in E-flat, for horn, the orchestral score condensed into a piano accompaniment by Carl Reinecke; Adagio, for piano and cello, by Bargiel; Allegro Appassionato, for piano and cello, by Saint-Saëns (both new), and Ronzo Brillant, for piano and violin, op. 70, Schubert.

The Bach Preludes and Fugues were clearly and beautifully played, the Fugue in E minor with great feeling. Mr. Paine's two trio movements were genial, refined and interesting, and finely played with Mr. Listemann and Mr. Hartdegen. The string quartet arrangement of Rubinstein's *Berceuse* sounded strangely out of tune.

The new Trio by Raff interested us so much that we should like to hear it again; except perhaps the impetuous Finale which seemed too full of "sound and fury." But the third movement (Andante quasi Larghetto) had depth and tenderness; only the conclusion seemed needlessly held back. All the performances were admirable. But the most interesting matter was yet to come, and just here, by an unwelcome fatality, we were obliged to leave.

MUSIC IN SALEM, MASS. Here are the programmes of some concerts given this winter at the Essex Institute. The Mendelssohn Quintette Club opened the series on Monday evening, Nov. 27, as follows:

1. Quintet in C, Op. 163..... Schubert
2. Concertino for Flute..... Demersseman
Edw. Heindl.
3. Danse Macabre..... Saint-Saëns
4. Fantaisie Polonoise (Cello)..... Servais
Rudolph Hennig.
5. Adagio from Septet..... Beethoven
6. Violin Solo: "Les Arpèges,"..... Vieuxtemps
William Schutze.
7. Ballet Music from the "Queen of Sheba,"
Gounod

The second concert (Dec. 18) was by the Cecilia Quartette (Miss Abbie Whinnery, Mrs. J. W. Weston, Mrs. J. H. Long and Mrs. H. E. Sawyer), with Mr. A. W. Foote for pianist; and this the programme:

1. Quartet—"Ave Maria,".....
2. Song—"The Carrier Dove,"
Mrs. Sawyer.
3. Duet—"As it fell upon a day,"..... Bishop
Miss Whinnery and Mrs. Long.
4. Piano Solo—Fifth Hungarian Rhapsody..... Liszt
5. Quartet—"The Flowers' Lullaby,".....
6. Song—"Sancta Maria,"..... Faure
Mrs. Weston.
7. Trio—"Psalm of Life,".....
8. Piano Solos. {a. Nocturne (Op. 32, No. 1.)} Chopin
{b. Melody (Op., No. 1.)} Rubinstein
9. Song—"Mermaid's Song,"..... Haydn
Miss Whinnery.
10. Quartet—"La Zingarella,".....
11. Song—"Absence,"..... A. H. Pease
Mrs. Long.
12. Quartet—"Ye Spotted Snakes,".....

In the third concert, Jan. 8, Mr. B. J. Lang and his pupil, Miss Grace Sampson, appeared as pianists, and Mrs. C. H. Goss, soprano, as vocalist, in these selections:

1. Variations for two Pianofortes. (Op. 46),
Schumann
2. Ave Maria..... Cherubini
3. Sonata in D major, for two Pianofortes..... Mozart
4. Mother, O Sing me to Rest..... Franz
5. In the Woods.....
6. Concerto in G minor. (Op. 22)..... Saint-Saëns
(Andante—Allegro Scherzando—Presto).

The fourth concert (Jan. 22) was made up by Miss Clara L. Emilio, Mr. Geo. W. Sumner, and Messrs. August and Wulf Fries:

1. Trio in G major..... Haydn
An-lante-Adagio-Rondo all'Ongarese
(Presto).
2. "Sognal"..... Schira
3. Violin Solos..... Joachim Raff
Cavatina and Tarantella, (Op. 85, Nos. 3
and 6.)
4. Piano Solos. a. Study in C major on false notes,
b. "Du bist die Ruh"..... Rubinstein
c. "Orpheus with his Lute"..... Arthur Sullivan
5. Polonaise in C major, for 'Cello and Piano,
(Op. 3)..... Chopin
7. a—"Tre giorni son che Nina"..... Pergolesi
b—"Du bist wie eine Blume"..... Rubinstein
8. Trio in D minor, (Op. 49)..... Mendelssohn
Scherzo—Andante con moto tranquillo.
Finale, allegro appassionata.

NEW YORK. The *Tribune*, Feb. 10, speaks of the close of the Kellogg Opera season:

The three weeks' season of English opera at the Academy of Music comes to a close to-day. "Mignon" was represented last night for the benefit of Miss Kellogg, and the prima donna made her reappearance on that occasion after the brief illness which has lately kept her in retirement. She personated the title rôle after her usual effective manner, overacting it, as we think, in several scenes, and making the mental aberrations of *Mignon* unpleasantly and unnecessarily prominent. There can be no doubt, however, that her voice is well suited in the light, graceful, and sentimental music of the French composer, nor, considering the care and intelligence which she has bestowed upon the part, can we wonder that she has made this opera one of the most popular in her repertory. She was well seconded last night by Mr. Maas as *Wilhelm* and indifferently supported by the *Filina* of Mrs. Rosewald, while the pretty character of *Fredrick*, so often intrusted to an incompetent performer, was charmingly rendered by Mrs. Seguin. The *Lothario* was Mr. Henry Peakes. The house was full, and so a singularly successful season comes to an appropriate end. The popularity of English opera in New York has been strikingly confirmed by the recent ventures of the Hess and Kellogg company, and it seems now to have reached a point where the manager may be expected to show a zeal for artistic and thorough performances and the critic may be expected to be somewhat exacting.

By the same paper we learn, that:

The second appearance of Miss Emma Abbott in this country since her return from Europe was made at Chickering Hall last evening, before an audience which in point both of numbers and sympathy was all that could be desired. So much has been written of late about both the business and domestic difficulties of Miss Abbott, of her marriage, and the unfortunate connection which she had with London managers, that public curiosity was widely awakened, and a desire was felt on all sides to know whether she was really all that her friends have claimed for her, and whether she would prove to be the representative American prima donna that we had been led to expect. It must be confessed that we have experienced some feeling of disappointment in hearing her. Miss Abbott has naturally a good voice—not by any means a phenomenal one, either in point of quality or volume or range—but one of those useful, reliable soprano voices, of which we already have several in the city. It is fairly flexible, light but generally agreeable in quality, but in the upper register there is an edge which grates very unpleasantly on the ear, and it is essentially metallic. In matter of cultivation, Miss Abbott seems to have been well taught, yet she has unpleasant tricks, such as "pumping" the voice on particular notes, and an excessive use of diminuendo effects, and her runs are often slovenly. She has intelligence, however, and sings with taste and feeling, and her work is almost always carefully done. But she is not great in any way, and it is not to be wondered at that she met with no greater success in England than she did. If she pursues her career, she will in all probability remain a useful and respectable concert singer; we doubt if she ever will become anything more than this. Miss Abbott sang last night an aria from *Gomez's* opera, "Guarany," the romance "Non conosci," from "Mignon," and Ardit's duet, "A Night in Venice" with Brignoli. The last of the three was altogether the best. Miss Abbott has the assistance of Signors Brignoli and Ferranti, who were good as usual, of Mr. W. R. Case, a promising pianist from Paris, and of Emil Seifert, a violinist who did not impress us at all favorably. The troupe as a whole is a strong one. There was an orchestra, conducted by Max Maretzky, and it was very poor.

PHILADELPHIA. The third classical soirée of Mr. Charles H. Jarvis took place on Saturday evening last, and the fine programme presented was attentively listened to by an appreciative audience. The Beethoven trio in B flat for piano, clarinet and 'cello, was given in a spirited manner, the clarinet playing of Mr. W. H.

Scheider being unexceptionable. Mr. Engelke played a 'cello solo by Ernst, and, unhappily, on account of the band music at the meeting on Broad street, could not be heard very distinctly. The event of the evening was the Weber sonata in C, for piano, which was rendered perfectly by Mr. Jarvis. The immense difficulties of this work seemed but to call forth his varied resources, and the last movement, generally called the "perpetual," was so resolutely played, and with such electric precision, that it carried the audience away with enthusiasm. The two Liszt solos were as successfully conquered, while, in his interpretation of the Chopin numbers, he had the subtle sentiment and delicate touch so much needed in the works of that composer. The concert closed with a novel duo for two pianos by St. Saëns, being variations on a theme (the trio of the *Menuetto*, Op. 31, No. 3) by Beethoven, and was effectively rendered by Messrs. Jarvis and Warner. February 24 is the date of the next soirée.—*Bulletin*, Jan. 20.

In his book upon America, Offenbach says that "while on all sides intelligence and labor have produced wonders, it is sad to notice that America has neglected to cultivate those arts which charm the mind." The sadness with which the soul of Offenbach is clouded as he contemplates our neglect of those arts which charm the mind is of a kind calculated to fill Americans not only with sympathy but with deep remorse. When we reflect how much Offenbach has done to encourage in us a love for art by sending us musical jinn-crackery, by occupying our stage with obscene dramas, and by securing as interpreters of those women with insufficient clothing, cracked voices and no morals, we can hardly be surprised at his reproaches. No wonder his great heart is filled with pain, and it will be no wonder if he shall turn from the melancholy spectacle of a people loathing art, and find relief from his feelings in writing out another opera in which adultery will be adorned with musical fireworks and sin will hop about to the fantastic screech of fiddles.—*Philadelphia Bulletin*.

A Good Orchestra for Boston.

Mr. Hassard is out in the New York *Tribune* with a suggestion. Since Strakosch's opera house has proved what he calls the "bursting of the enormous bubble blown by the most prismatic of managers," he would suggest the building of a music hall for Theodore Thomas. It is perfectly true, as he says, that New York capitalists can comprehend the value of painting or statuary, or see the beneficence of founding free libraries; but the place which music ought to hold has not been yielded to it. It is perfectly certain that it is a calamitous state of affairs which allows one of the first orchestras in the world, built up by fifteen years of hard work, to be disbanded for want of "a room to play in," and it is likewise time that the great public appreciated what Mr. Thomas has done for general musical culture. If the capitalists can be made to see these two points, perhaps they will compensate for the loss of the Central Park Garden by providing some support for the orchestra which shall be more stable than purchasing tickets to a few symphony concerts. So much for New York. Now as to our own city, it is no more than proper to say that we need a first-class orchestra as well as Gotham. There has been an honest endeavor, it would seem, on the part of the orchestra at the Harvard Symphony concerts this year, to provide us with the desideratum so far as they were able. They utter no new cry when they ask for liberal patronage. So far as we have learned, they have not asked for a garden to sell beer or to give the people a chance to promenade, but for a hearty co-operation on the part of the public. There seem yet to be several things needful to complete the desired end. In the first place our recognized artists, such as the Philharmonic Club or the Mendelssohn Quintette, ought always to fill a place in the ranks; no pains should be spared to have them arrange their outside trips so as not to interfere with playing at every Boston symphony concert. Then there ought to be some scheme devised by which we could have more than one musician of a kind in town. If, as at a recent concert, the first oboe man should be taken ill again, there ought to be some one ready to take his place, without resorting to such lame expedients as the necessities of the case have often enforced. As to thorough rehearsals, we have no doubt that they are now the order of the day; but there ought certainly to be something like a dictatorial will in conducting them, irrespective of manifold suggestions from the less-informed. Then there should be a most ready desire to please the public and to satisfy their demands so far as a generous sympathy goes. And further, said public should exercise a lenient charity rather than proffer a critical coldness. In this everybody is concerned. To provide instrumentalists and make it worth their while to stay here, is something about which the moneyed part of the population should be consulted. These things have perhaps been said a hundred times, but the hundred-and-first may show the impotency with which it is hoped the matter will be urged till we are better off musically than we are now; till we have as good and as large a force of orchestral as of piano players, and till we shall gain what New York lacks—the sympathy of the people of means, and acquire what she already has—the sympathy of the people with their own orchestra.—*Globe*.

Special Notices.

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF THE LATEST MUSIC, Published by Oliver Ditson & Co.

Vocal, with Piano Accompaniment.

The Message to Heaven. G. 4. b to E. Tours. 40
"So I whispered, very softly,
Little sky-lark, when you fly,—"
A sweet, touching child's song, of the right
pitch for an Alto voice.

Summer Friends. C. 4. c to E. Pinsuti. 35
"Ye swallows gay, I love you not,
Ye are but summer friends."
Something like the German "Ye merry birds,"
and will please the lovers of that song.

Hark! how sweet the thrushes sing. E. 4. Eichberg. 30
"Summer's glory is begun,
Beauty, beauty holds the world!"
A gem. Words by Celia Thaxter.

What we have loved, we love forever. F. 3. Pinsuti. 35
c to D.
"It swells with the tears of darker days,
But fills all the past with a golden haze."
Beautiful throughout. Words from "The Afterglow."

The First, the Early Love. (Was du zuerst
geliebt). F sharp. 4. f (bass staff)
to d. Bartach. 30
"Doch, nimmermehr vergeht das Schöne,"
"It ne'er will pass away;"
A very "worthy" bass song, of rich sentiment.

Kick him when he's down. Sg and Cho. Elmwood. 35
F. 3. d to E.
"They go for him, go for him, certain."
"What's the use of being moral or honest."
Capital comic song, almost too true to be funny.

When gentle Winds. Duet. F. 3. c to F. Schumann. 35
"Again we breathe the evening gale,
And list the song-birds in the vale."
New and musical duets are not plenty. This is
surely one.

A Kiss for a Song. Sg and Cho. F. 3. Giannetti. 30
c to E.
"If the kiss is not enough,
You can give it back, you know."
Very graceful trifle, which will surely please.

Instrumental.

Reve d'Amour. Valse. C. 3. Lamothe. 75
A waltz, (not a set) of great beauty, from the
now famous "dance" composer.

Juliette Valse. 3. Lamothe. 75
A fine set of waltzes (4) with introduction and
Coda.

On Mountain High. 3. Wettsenborn. 50
Gracefully brilliant set of (5) waltzes. The
title is sometimes varied to "On High Mountains."

Good-Night, my Only Child. Transcr. Op. 281. Eb. 4. Jungmann. 30
Opus 281 shows that "Jungmann" is a "Young-
mann" no longer. But his music loses nothing of
its grace and beauty.

Phantom Dance. Morceau de Salon. C. minor. 4. G. D. Wilson. 50
Fantastically beautiful.

Secret Love. Gavotte. G. 4. Resch. 35
A hearty, brusque sort of dance, which is very
inspiring.

With Chime and Song. Concert Polonaise. E. 4. Bohm. 60
Very wide-awake polonaise, which should draw
applause from an audience.

Reminiscences of Philadelphia Waltz. C. 3. Hardee. 40
Very pleasing memories, if this agreeable music
interprets them.

Awaking of the Lion. (Le Reveil du Lion). Caprice Heroique. For four hands. Db. 4. de Konstki. 1.25
A celebrated piece, now rendered more power-
ful by the four-hand arrangement. Good practice
and grand exhibition piece.

ABBREVIATIONS.—Degrees of difficulty are marked from 1 to 7. The key is denoted by a capital letter, as C, E, etc. A large Roman letter marks the lowest and the highest note if on the staff, small Roman letters if below or above the staff. Thus: "C. 5, c to E" means "Key of C, Fifth degree, lowest letter, c on the added line below, highest letter, E on the 4th space."

